Air Force Conservation Program: Mission, Organization, Issues

Dr. J. Douglas Ripley
Directorate of Environment
Office of The Civil Engineer
e-mail: Douglas.Ripley@pentagon.af.mil

HQ USAF/ILEVP
1260 Air Force
Pentagon
Washington, DC
20330-1260
Phone: (703) 604-0632

Air Force Conservation Program

New Boston AFS, NH

Vandenberg AFB, CA

Nellis AFR, NV

Air Force Ecosystem Management

"The mission of the Department of Defense is more than just aircraft, guns, and missiles. Part of the defense job is protecting the lands, waters, timber, and wildlife - the priceless natural resources that make this great nation of ours worth defending."

General Thomas D. White
Air Force Chief of Staff
1957-1961

Air Force Conservation Program

Overview

- Scope
- Major Program Elements
- Funding
- Implementation
- Major Issues

Scope of Program

- Approximately 8 million acres of land
  - Hiking, camping, and educational opportunities
  - Over 60% for dual use my military and public
- Over 700,000 acres of commercial forest
- Over 20,000 hunting & fishing permits annually
- 79 federally listed threatened or endangered species
- 1,950 properties on the National Register of Historic Places

Major Program Elements

- Natural Resources
  - Land Management
  - Agriculture
  - Fish and Wildlife
  - Forestry
  - Outdoor Recreation
- Cultural Resources
  - Historic Properties
  - Archaeological Sites

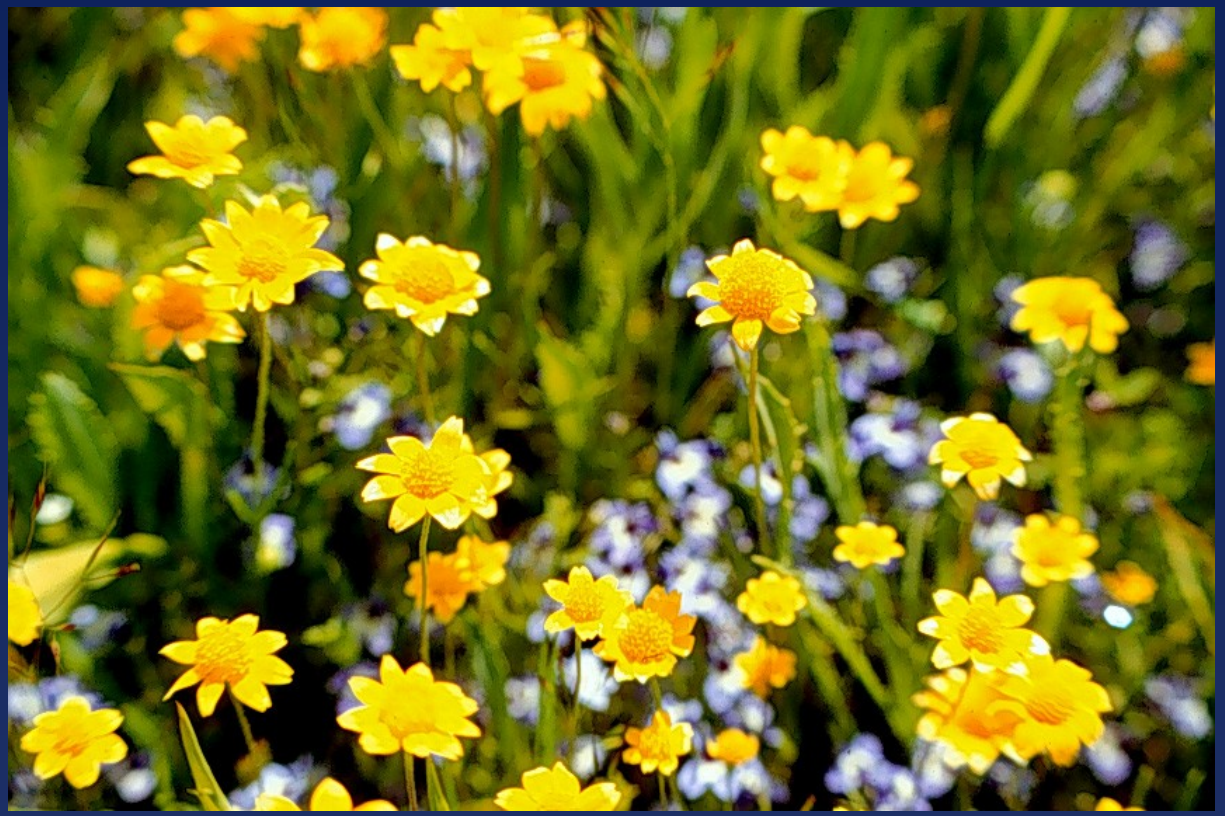
Wetlands - Avon Park AFB, FL

Agriculture Lease

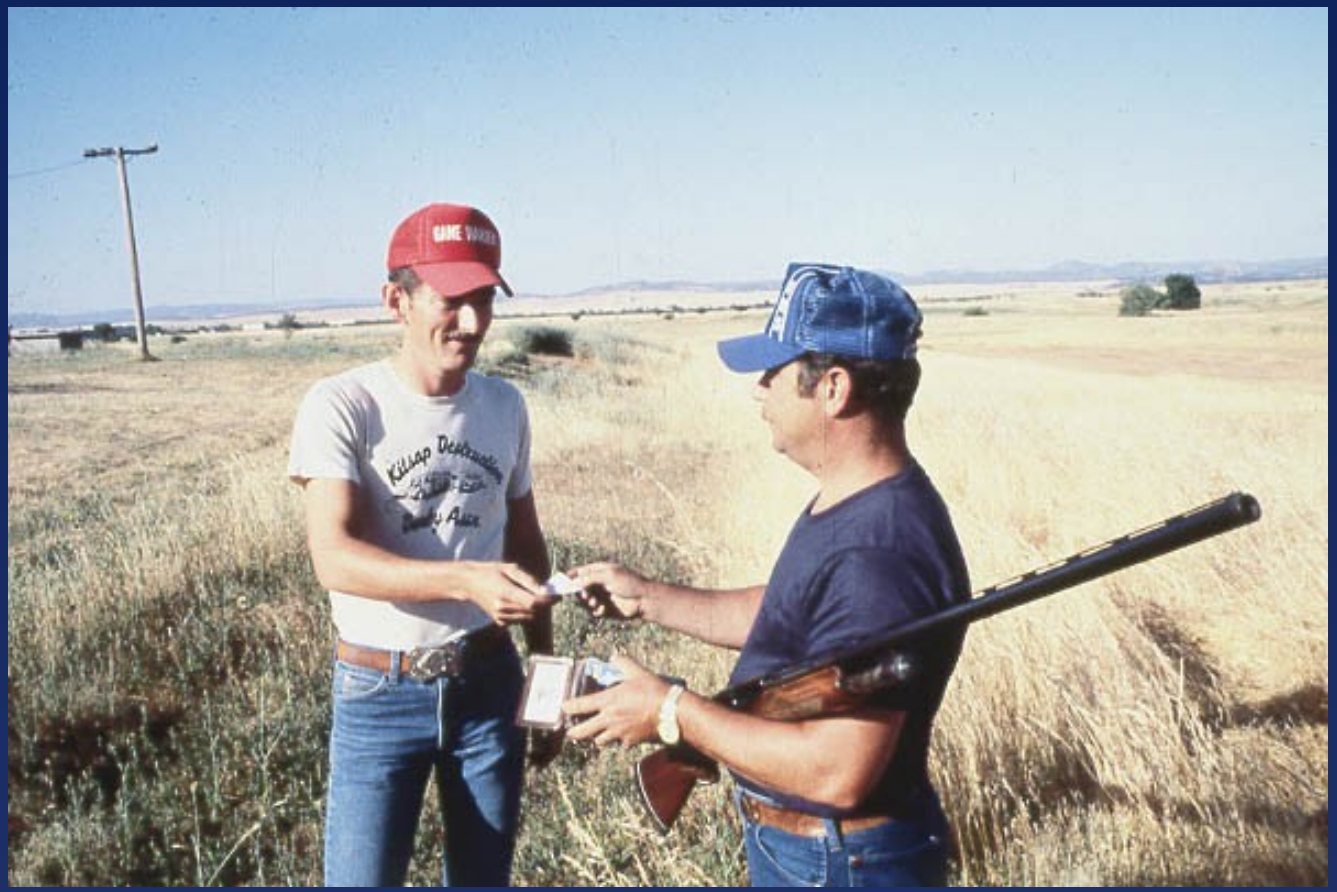
Grazing - Avon Park AFR, FL

Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope, Goldwater AFR, Arizona

Contra Costa Goldfields, Travis AFB, CA



Hunting Programs - Beale AFB, CA



Forestry Programs

Outdoor Recreation

Historic Properties - Randolph AFB, TX

Archaeology - Vandenberg AFB, CA

Air Force Conservation Program

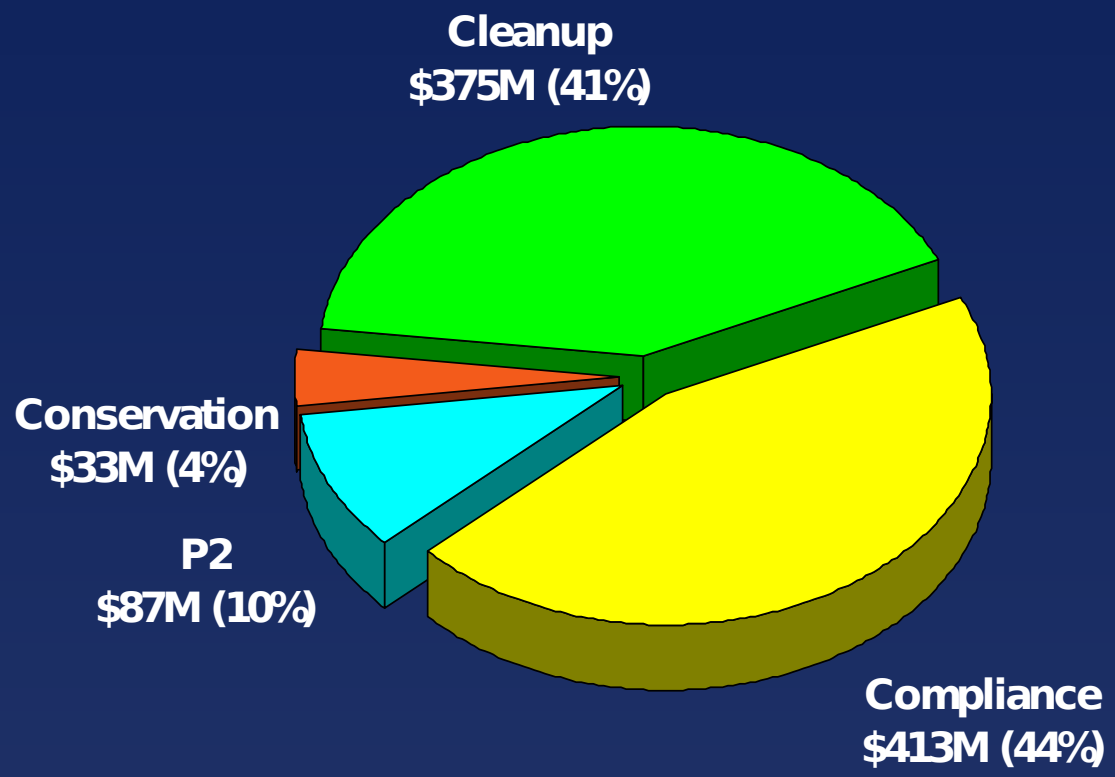
Funding

- Initially derived from the sale of hunting and fishing permits, timber harvests, and agricultural leasing
- Legacy Resource Management Program created in FY91
- Compliance requirements defined in FY93
  - Operations and Services: Recurring Costs
  - Level I: Out of Compliance
  - Level II: Future Compliance Deadline
  - Level III: Beyond Compliance

Funding Sources and Levels

- Operations and Maintenance:
  - $33 Million Annually
- Commodities Accounts (Forestry, Ag. Outleasing & Fish and Wildlife Permits):
  - $5 Million Annually
- Legacy Resource Management Program:
  - $1-2 Million Annually

USAF FY 01 Environmental Budget

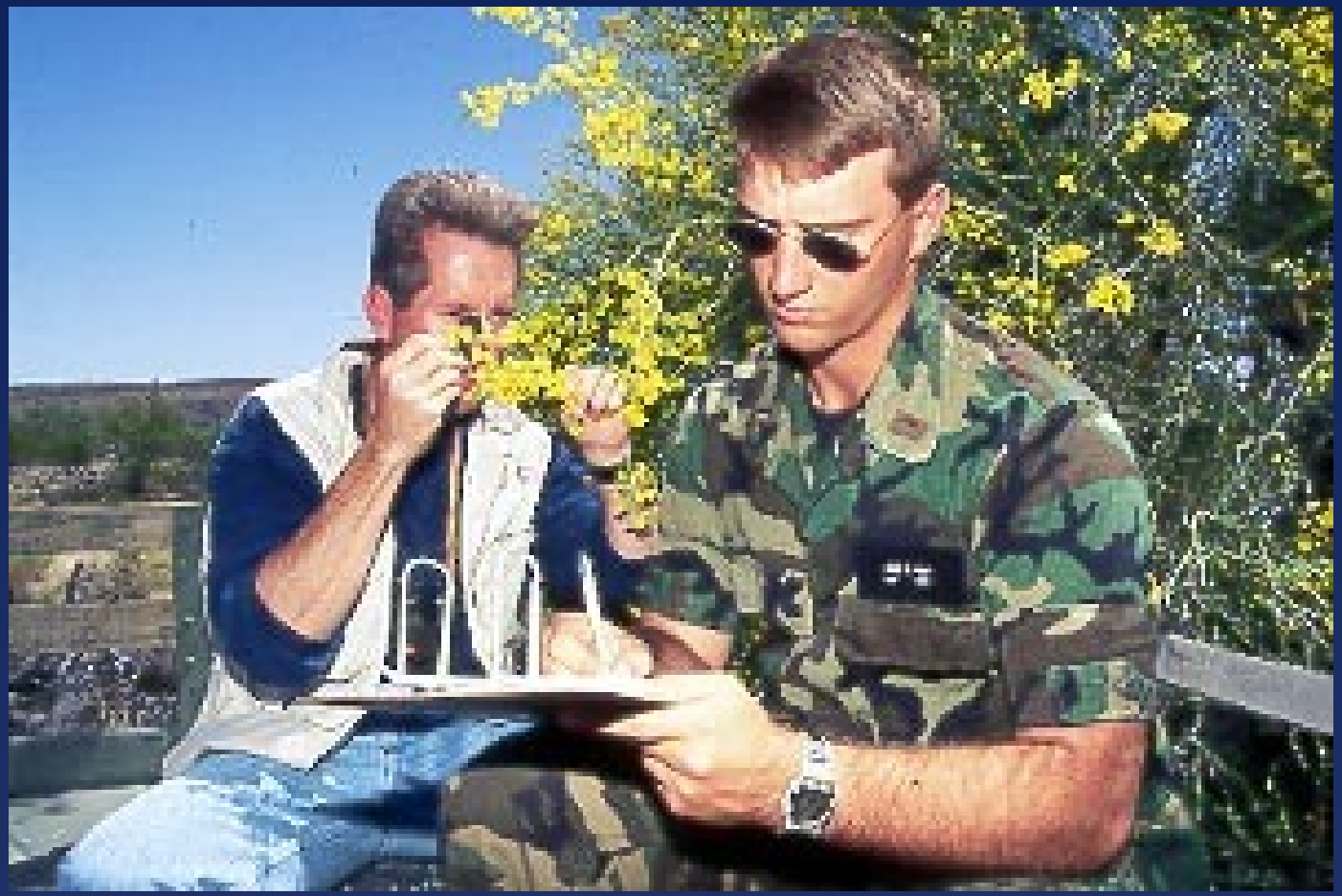


Air Force Conservation Program

Implementation

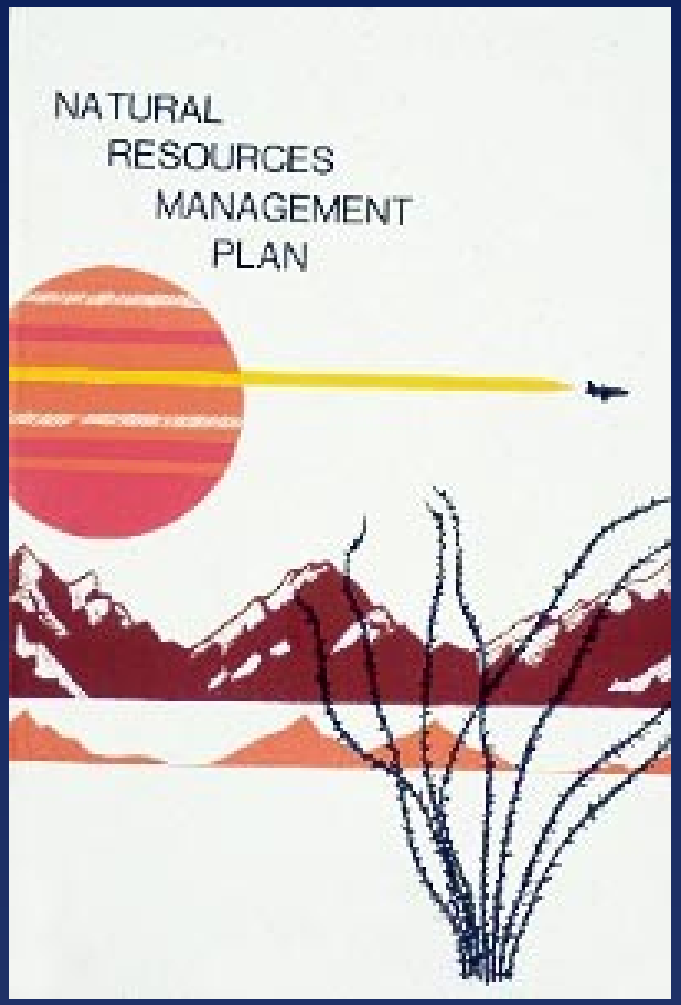
- Inventories
- Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMP)
- Partnerships

Inventories

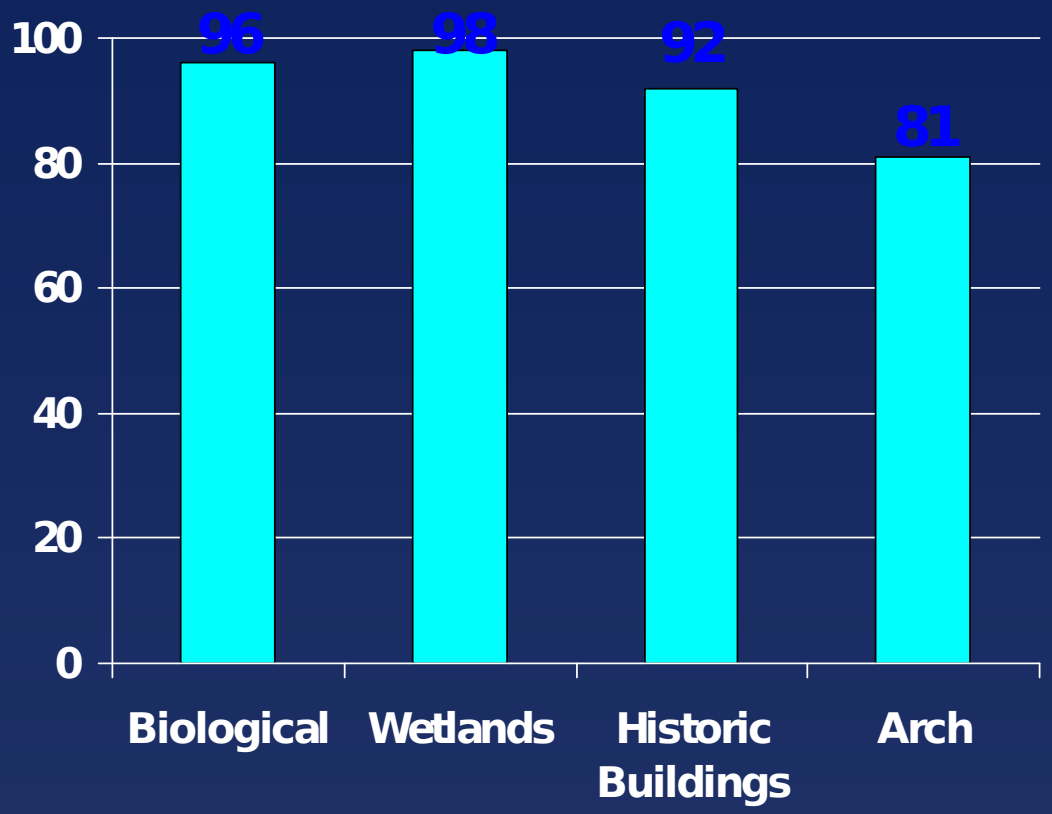


The Nature Conservancy

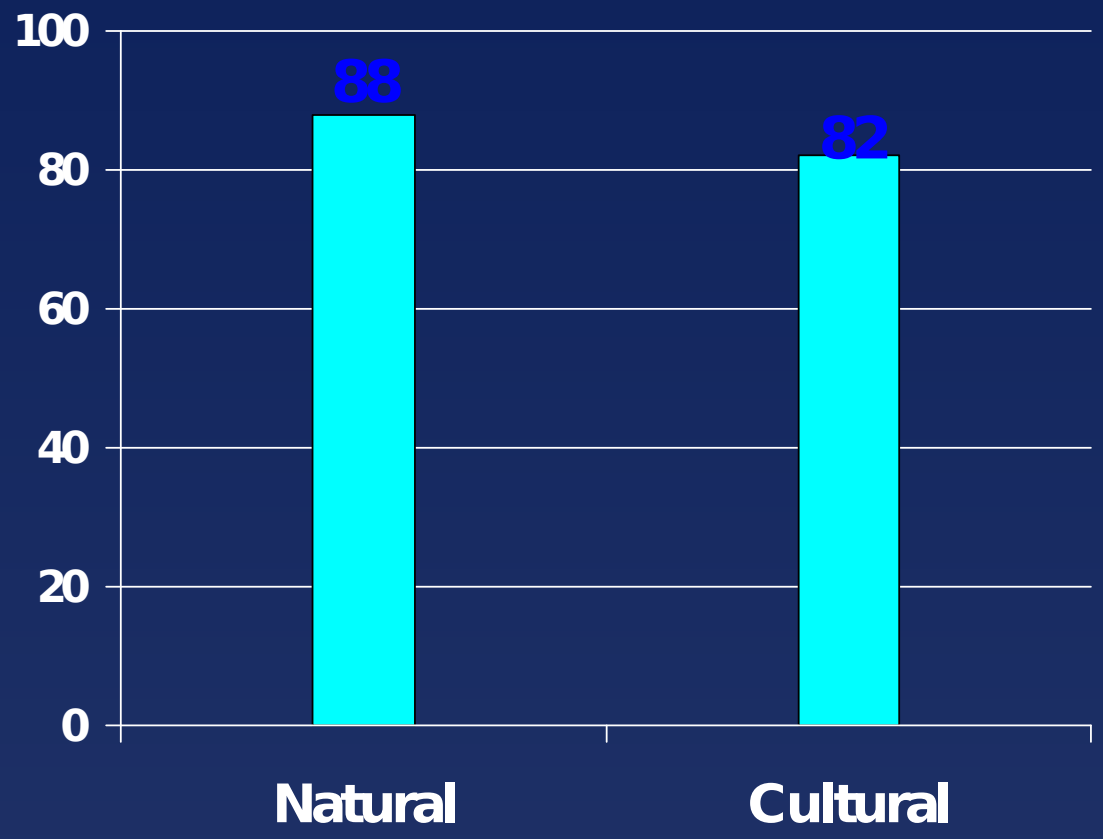
Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans



USAF Conservation Inventory Status



USAF Management Plan Status



Major Issues

- Encroachment
- Overflight Conflicts
- Noise
- Ecosystem Management

Air Force Ecosystem Management

- Examples
  - Eglin AFB, Florida
  - Goldwater AFR, Arizona
  - Nellis AFR, Nevada

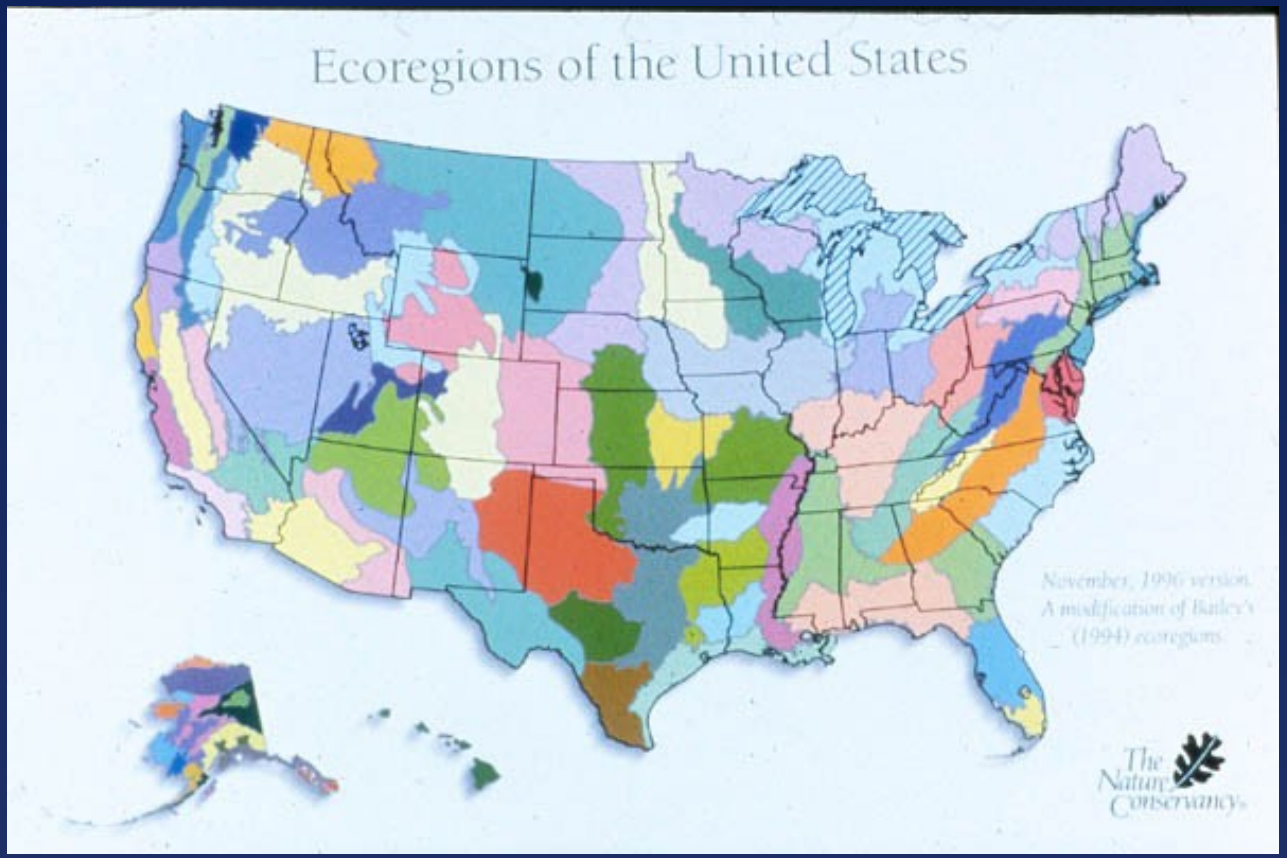
Eglin AFB, FL

Eglin AFB, FL

Eglin AFB, FL

Goldwater AFR, Arizona

Ecoregional Planning



Nellis AFR, Nevada

Nellis AFR, Nevada

Air Force Ecosystem Management

Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend;

you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left...

you cannot love game and hate predators;

you cannot conserve the waters and waste the ranges;

you cannot build the forest and mine the farm.

The land is one organism.

Aldo Leopold
Round River

Conclusion